



BOARD MEETING MINUTES:

July 29th, 2021

CALL TO ORDER – Board of Trustees

A Board of Trustees meeting, of the Peru Public Library, was held on Thursday, July 29th, 2021. The meeting was called to order at 6:31 PM and was presided over by President Alison Paul.

ATTENDEES

MEMBERS PRESENT: *Regina McDowell, Regine Brindle, Ellen Harvey, Leslie Murphy, and President Alison Paul.*

MEMBER APOLOGIES: *Bryan Maggart and Deb Swihart*

DIRECTOR PRESENT: *Maryann Farnham and Assistant Director, Michelle Spangler, were present.*

GUESTS: *Staff member Lisa Rummel was also present, to take the minutes.*

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

June Minutes

The secretary, Brindle, had corrected and approved the minutes. No one else had any corrections. Harvey motioned to accept the minutes and Murphy seconded. Brindle called the roll for the vote, which was as follows: Paul – aye, McDowell – aye, Brindle – aye, Harvey – aye, Murphy – aye. The motion passed unanimously.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Swihart, the treasurer, had sent Paul a statement saying that everything was good with the financials, as she was absent from this meeting but had looked over everything. Farnham pointed out that there were a lot of financials due to June being the end of the 2nd quarter. She also pointed out that revenue had increased this year in all areas so far. The library is currently underbudget which is good as the AC expenses will be coming and will be a lot. The board asked why the library is currently underbudget, and Farnham said a lot of it was due to not spending as much on employee wages due to being open less hours still. The budget for 2022 will have good news on that front later on.

On the claims, there was nothing unusual to report. Farnham pointed out that one name did change, however, so the bills are for the same company despite it looking like a new place. Harvey asked how receipts were disbursed and if they were immediately deposited in the bank. Farnham said that yes, it all goes into the operating fund. There was discussion regarding how to read the paperwork, including which column shows what information and so on.

Murphy motioned to accept the financials and Brindle seconded. Roll was called: Paul – aye, McDowell – aye, Brindle – aye, Harvey – aye, Murphy – aye. The motion passed with all ayes.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Paul announced that her passport had finally arrived, so she will be gone for the August meeting. Vice-president Murphy will be leading that board meeting.

AGENDA

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Paul gave the update on the Marie Stuart Edwards statue. Construction has started although they, Hoffman's Nursery, ran into unexpected concrete almost immediately. They are hoping to be done in about a week. The statue is scheduled to be cast on August 9th. Anyone is allowed to attend who wants to go and watch. The RDP fundraising committee have raised \$63,000 so far. They are confident they will raise everything needed. There was discussion about the essay contest, AcesPlus read Murphy's letter with all her questions about it. There had been discussion about Wolfe contacting local women-owned businesses for prizes. There are no prizes yet. Whether there will be any participation in it was discussed as well. Betsy Wolfe filed an application requesting a permit to close off the street but that was tabled till Tuesday's meeting by the Board of Works. The police are in favor of the permit being granted. There are 5 vendors so far. Someone asked about lunch plans for the school kids who will be there. There was no answer; however, someone was going to check which schools plan to bring kids. So far, North Miami is the only one they are sure of. There is going to be a march. RDP's unveiling committee request participants wear white and carry banners for it. They will be making banners at the next meeting in a few weeks. Someone is going to lend chairs for the event. The library agreed to store them, as there was not going to be very many. Paul mentioned that the library had not been advised that the construction people would be coming on Monday. Paul talked to RDP and they admitted not sending in that information to the library. There was a mention of the police being down in numbers and suggestion of having an EMT presence. Murphy then talked about the essay contest, as she was helping the committee for the statue unveiling with that. Paul asked about having the contest next year, for the anniversary, instead of trying to fit it in this year on short notice. Brindle said she would love to tell the stories of the women involved with the suffragist movement here in Miami county, as without those stories, it's a hollow statue. Paul then listed off some of the dignitaries and people coming to the unveiling. Murphy asked if there was a post-unveiling dinner still. Paul said that Kathleen Plothow had been planning one but stepped off the committee. There was some discussion about a possible thing in the evening but nothing set in stone. The museum also isn't planning on doing much at all for the day. Brindle mentioned that she is making daytime plans with some of the relatives of Marie Stuart Edwards. Brindle then told the board that a loveseat owned by Edwards was being given on permanent loan to the library, to be displayed during the day's event and after. Farnham shared how she planned to have it displayed so it wouldn't be harmed. Spangler stated that she is going to see if the staff and the library board can park at the church down the street that day. Paul then gave an overview of the planned decorations for the library that day, with Brindle sharing Miami County IN Worth Remembering's plans. Farnham mentioned that yard signs had been purchased so people would have someplace to find out some information about Marie Stuart Edwards, as well as Ellen Cole Fetter. Brindle said they had some buttons to give out to a few people as well. The next meeting about the statue is in two weeks.

Permission was granted to look at phones in order for the board members to determine if moving the August meeting to the 19th would work. Everyone agreed that would work, aside from those who already knew they'd be gone in August. Paul motioned to move the board meeting from the 26th to the 19th of August and Brindle seconded. The vote was as follows: Paul – aye, McDowell – aye, Brindle – aye, Harvey – aye, Murphy – aye. The motion passed with all ayes.

Spangler had no new information about the storywalk to share, but did report on the summer reading program, which ends on Saturday. Compared to another local library, our numbers are looking good.

She is planning on having challenges over school breaks or for special events, as Beanstack allows us to create challenges for anything and anytime. She also told the board about being Aaron Yanged. It was mentioned that most of the 600 prizes to the community for the Summer Reading Program are books, so that is a lot of free books being given out.

The library never has programming in August, but our in-person programming will be starting back up in September.

The 2022 budget will be discussed under New Business.

The Public Library Standards Compliance 2020 letter is in the board packet. The library needs to meet standards to get e-rate for our internet, and we did pass.

Farnham and Spangler had been part of a meeting about what they could and couldn't ask for the ARPA grants. Farnham said it was cryptic, everything has to be related to Covid but installation/labor fees will not be covered. We can ask for up to \$100,000 just with no installation costs. Farnham then mentioned a few of the things she is wanting to include in the request, such as hoping to get the hotspots paid for through July 30th, 2022. She is also hoping to replace the public computers with laptops. PPE is of course covered by the grant, but so are storywalks, so Farnham wants to get Spangler's storywalk plus another one covered by the grant with the grants Spangler has already raised going towards labor costs only. Farnham then stated that she is wanting to include a library van on the grant request. This was discussed for a while, with Farnham pointing out that the whole grant may be funded or only part of it – which could mean only a part of a specifically requested part of the grant application. Farnham said she thought it would be the next step for the library, to allow us to do outreach. She also mentioned that the staff could use it instead of their personal vehicles to haul things for outdoor programs and annual outreach opportunities. However, there are costs involved, such as insurance and gas, amongst others. A possible future cost would also be someone whose whole job would be outreach with the van. Farnham had talked to Smith about the insurance, and he estimated it at \$700-\$1000 for the insurance – although that level of insurance would only cover the van for 25-mile driving radius. Paul pointed out that the position would be new, as it wouldn't be like covering the desk at the library and would require the person to be away from the library. She also mentioned that it didn't necessarily need to be full-time. The grant application is due by August 8th, but as it is a reimbursement grant, we would have till next summer to figure out the details. Farnham brought up pop-up libraries as a possibility with the van as well. Murphy thought we should go for it. Paul commented that we can always decide against doing it if we are only granted half the money needed for it.

Murphy made a motion that they go forward with the grant and Brindle seconded. Paul stated that the motion was that the board gave permission for Farnham to apply for the grant which would include a motor vehicle and asked for the roll to be called. That went as follows: Paul – aye, McDowell – aye, Brindle – aye, Harvey – aye, Murphy – aye. The motion passed unanimously.

Farnham informed the board that she was contacted on Tuesday and the library is being audited. It's lots of work, so she requested that it be moved to next week. It will cover years 2016 to 2020. Because of our size, it is called an examination, not an audit, but it functions the same.

On the AC, it is still out on the lower two levels. At 10:36 the previous morning, it was 84 degrees on the children's floor. The compressors went out, and after one was replaced, it went out again after two

days. We are not being charged for that one. So, something is going to have to be done as issues with the AC every year doesn't work. On top of that, the ACs on the adult floor started leaking so weren't working for a day as well. QPH thought we should scrap the system for the lower floors and get a new one. \$50-60,000 or more was their estimate. Farnham talked to Brenda Weaver, who thought we should talk to the city about them giving us the money for the HVAC. Even just some of the funding would help. Farnham is planning to talk to the mayor. The other funding options would be if the county contract went through for next year, or budgeting LIRF or the Rainy Day Fund, but Farnham really doesn't want to do that. She's going to talk to as many AC companies as possible about possible solutions/options. She talked to Thermodyn when they were fixing the adult floor ACs about putting the same ones downstairs, and it would be about \$10,000 to install each, so could easily end up equaling the QPH estimate.

OLD (UNFINISHED) BUSINESS

Paul reported that Farnham, Spangler, Weaver, and herself met to discuss county service. They got the county commissioner's thoughts on funding, the library's programs, and Paul explained that programs were always funded, as part of the budget, so she thought it would be a better use of the county's money to fund cards instead. That was discussed at some length, including what would be required of the county if they wanted to limit the number of cards a family could get, as that counts as discrimination on our end if we are the ones doing it. The library was willing and able to still send the county all the information we had in years past, if that was what they needed. Having the contract be for more than one year was also discussed, which Weaver didn't think was an option. Weaver was also asked about the issue their lawyer had brought up, but she wasn't concerned about it. If it did go through, it would be for 2022. It was a positive meeting overall, but for now, the library is just awaiting further developments. Paul asked Weaver if the county could give us \$2,500 – which is the same amount they give the Converse Library, with no strings attached, every year – this year. Weaver was going to take it to the commissioners so we will have to wait and see about that as well.

Summing it up in discussion, the library is having to wait and see what the county decides about the contract. The ball is in their court for now and they have to figure it out for their 2022 budget as well. As Paul had told Weaver, there could even be a big signing event put on for it, if it went through. Paul commented that she couldn't believe we live in a library desert like this, where not everyone has a library and there's no state library service, but that we will try to do what we can, there's just only so much money. After all, if every single person in Peru who pays taxes towards the library got a card and came in here, we would shut as there wouldn't be anything on the shelves and the library just couldn't keep up with everyone. That's just how libraries operate, and if a library is operating at 40% of the population coming in, it's doing wonderfully. Farnham thought the library was operating over that in 2018-19 but with Covid, we took a hit. And it's not just about having enough books for everyone, it's also access to all the materials, including the ability to ship in materials from other Evergreen Indiana libraries, as well as access to our business services and the like. Farnham also pointed out that the county residents often think they can't come in to use the library's services, but that they can. Their perception, as Paul said, of what a library is and does is wrong, and if you can get them to realize that, you have a convert for life. Advocating for the library and changing perceptions was discussed by the library board at this point. Farnham shared a story about a woman she'd been talking about who bought a county card and saved just over the same amount with her first checkouts from the library. So, Paul concluded, we are hopeful.

NEW BUSINESS

Farnham explained what the e-rate resolution was and why we needed it. Murphy motioned to accept resolution to join the Indiana State Library Consortium for Public Library internet access and Brindle seconded. The vote was as follows: Paul – aye, McDowell – aye, Brindle – aye, Harvey – aye, Murphy – aye. The motion passed with all ayes.

Paul reported from the Budget committee, as Swihart was absent. Spangler had written it this year, for the first time. Swihart had looked over it and thought everything was fine. Originally, the plan was to give the staff a 5% cost-of-living increase, based on the Social Security cost-of-living estimate. However, Paul asked about just raising the clerks to \$10 as most were already so close to that, and Swihart said yes. So the minimum wage at the library will be \$10 an hour, which sounds like a magic number of sorts. So, that is what the budget committee is recommending to the board. Paul is bringing it to the board as part of the committee, so it just needs a second. Brindle said she would second it. The vote followed: Paul – aye, McDowell – aye, Brindle – aye, Harvey – aye, Murphy – aye. The 2022 budget recommendation passed with all ayes.

The budget hearing will be in September since so many board members will be gone in August, and that means the adoption will be in October.

There being no further business on the agenda, the meeting was adjourned by President Paul at 8:01 PM.

MINUTES PREPARED BY: Lisa Rummel, Peru Public Library staff member

SECRETARY APPROVAL:

(Signature & Date)

Peru Public Library
